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Sent: Monday, October 31, 2011 8:51 AM
To: licensinglistserv@virginiainteractive.org
Subject: Passenger Van Safety Information
Importance: Low

This file is being sent to providers of child day centers, family day homes, children's residential facilities, religiously exempt child day centers, short-term child day centers, family day systems, voluntarily registered family day homes and certified preschools from the Virginia Department of Social Services Email Distribution Service.

*****Please do not reply to this email.*****

Dear Child Care Providers:

Attached you will find an information document issued by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) urging users of 9-, 12- and 15-passenger vans to take specific steps to keep occupants safe.

This information document will be posted to the VDSS web pages by facility type under *Notices to Providers*.

Thank you.

Scroll down to view the attachment.

**Passenger Van Safety Information
Department of Social Services**

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is urging users of 9-, 12- and 15-passenger vans to take specific steps to keep occupants safe. Last year, in New York and Georgia, two fatal crashes involving 15-passenger vans that rolled over and resulted in 10 deaths give urgency to this reminder.

NHTSA's safety data indicates that 9-, 12- and 15-passenger vans are often inadequately maintained, and the tires are especially vulnerable to deterioration as they age. Owners need to make sure these vehicles have appropriately-sized tires that are properly inflated before every trip. NHTSA recommends that spare tires not be used as replacements for worn tires. In fact, many tire manufacturers recommend that tires older than 10 years not be used at all. Because these vehicles have unique handling characteristics, they display particular sensitivity to rollovers especially when they are fully loaded.

NHTSA is directing this advisory to organizations that may be keeping older passenger vans in service longer than usual because of tight transportation budgets. Pre-primary, primary and secondary schools should not use these vehicles for transporting school children, as they do not provide the same level of

safety as school buses. It is also against federal law for schools to buy new passenger vans for school transportation purposes.

In effort to warn all owners of 9-, 12- and 15-passenger vans of potential dangers, the Department of Social Services is encouraged to share this safety information with daycare centers that may transport children in these types of vehicles.

Here are some safety tips for anyone planning a trip in 9-, 12- and 15-passenger vans:

- If you are an owner, make sure the vehicle is properly maintained.
- Owners should make sure drivers are fully trained and experienced in operating a 9-, 12- and 15-passenger van and are properly licensed.
- 9-, 12- and 15-passenger vans are very sensitive to loading and should not be overloaded under any circumstances. Research shows overloading not only increases rollover risk but makes the vehicle more unstable in any handling maneuvers.
- Owners should make sure that properly sized tires are being used on their vehicles.
- Before every trip, drivers should check the tires for proper inflation, and make sure there are no signs of wear. Correct tire size and inflation pressure information can be found in the owner's manual.
- If you are a passenger, make sure you buckle up for every trip.

Additional information on 9-, 12- and 15-passenger van safety can be found at www.safercar.gov.